



## INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN FOSTERING ACADEMIC AUTONOMY AMONG STUDENTS.

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### ABSTRACT

This research paper aims to provide a detailed analysis of the important role teachers' play in promoting and nurturing academic autonomy among students. Academic autonomy refers to the ability of students to take ownership of their learning, make informed decisions, and develop a sense of independence in their academic pursuits. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' academic autonomy. The research found that while most teachers are aware of the concept of academic autonomy, students are not always aware of the autonomy they possess in the teaching-learning process. Therefore, it is crucial to educate students about academic autonomy, its benefits, and how they can develop it. The study also identifies the specific role of teachers in fostering academic autonomy in students. Teachers play a vital role in developing the competencies and capabilities related to academic autonomy. They can help students develop skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-reflection, which are crucial for academic autonomy. Teachers can also encourage and provide opportunities for students to take charge of their learning, make informed decisions, and take responsibility for their academic growth. In conclusion, this research paper highlights the awareness of academic autonomy among teachers and students and the crucial role that teachers play in fostering it in students. By promoting academic autonomy, teachers can help students become independent, self-directed learners capable of achieving their academic goals.

**Keywords:** Academic Autonomy, Teaching –Learning Process, self-reflection, self-directed learners.



## INTRODUCTION

The word autonomy, which comes from the Greek words autos (self) and nomos (rule or law), has a rich history in reference to self-rule or self-governance in ancient Greek city-states. Even today, the original meaning of the term is still relevant in the context of personal autonomy, which involves the ability to act in accordance with one's beliefs or desires without interference from others. Academic autonomy, on the other hand, refers to the degree of independence and self-direction that students have in managing their own learning experiences. It empowers students to actively engage in their education, make informed decisions about their learning paths, and take responsibility for their academic journey. By giving students greater control over their learning, academic autonomy promotes a number of important skills and attributes. For example, it fosters critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving abilities, as well as personal responsibility, adaptability, innovation, creativity, communication, and collaboration skills. All of these are essential for success in today's rapidly evolving educational and professional landscape. In recognition of the importance of student-centered learning approaches, the National Education Policy, 2020 places a greater emphasis on empowering students to take control of their own education. Traditional, teacher-centered methods may not always be effective in meeting the diverse needs of today's learners, which is why academic autonomy is seen as a key component in creating engaging, personalized, and effective learning experiences for students. By nurturing academic autonomy, educators can help students develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To investigate the role of teachers in fostering academic autonomy among higher education students in Pune city.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find the awareness amongst teachers about academic autonomy of students.
2. To find the awareness amongst students about their academic autonomy.
3. To assess the role of teachers in promoting academic autonomy amongst students.

## SCOPE, LIMITATION AND DELIMITATION

### Scope:

1. The present study will be applicable to all the teachers of higher education of Pune city.
2. The present study focuses on all the students of higher education from Pune city.

### Limitation:

1. The results of the present research solely depends on the responses given by the teachers and the students.
2. Students IQ, socio-economic status, interest, experience, etc. will not be considered.

### Delimitation:

The present study will be delimited to English medium teachers and students of Pune city only.

The present study will focus only on awareness towards academic autonomy.

The study will be delimited to students in higher education only.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the present study Descriptive survey research method was used.

### SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Objective	Sample	Sampling technique	Sample size
1	Teachers in higher education	Purposive sampling	50
2	Students studying in higher education	Purposive sampling	500
3	Teachers in higher education	Purposive sampling	50
	Students studying in higher education		500

## DATA COLLECTION

For the present study qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used.

Researcher made questionnaire, interview and observation methods were used to collect the data.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected was analysed by using quantitative method (percentage) and qualitative data analysis methods.

### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

#### **Objective1: To find the awareness amongst teachers about students' academic autonomy.**

It was found that 76% of teachers were aware about academic autonomy of students. Teachers were aware about what academic autonomy in students' means and how teachers can promote it in their day to day classrooms.

Few teachers knew academic autonomy in theory but bringing it in practice was difficult for them. Teachers of this group were unable to practice academic autonomy in their classrooms due to a gap between theory and practice.

Teachers with prescribed qualification of teaching degree (Teachers possessing degree in education disciplines) were very much aware of academic autonomy as compare to non-qualified teachers.

#### **Objective 2: To find the awareness amongst students about their academic autonomy.**

It was found that only 52% students were aware of the academic autonomy that they can possess. The students who have been exposed to an educational environment where teachers create awareness and understanding of academic autonomy have a better grasp of it. Most of the students were not clear about the ownership and accountability required to be academically autonomous. From the data collected it was found that students who are actively engaged in the teaching learning process are more aware about academic autonomy as compared to others.

#### **Objective 3: To assess the role of teachers in promoting academic autonomy amongst students.**

It was found that teachers are aware about their role in promoting academic autonomy amongst students. Most of the teachers agreed that their role in imbining academic autonomy amongst students is very important. Through interviews and observations it was found that teachers promoted academic autonomy in their students followed certain pedagogies and practices.

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Creating a conducive and learning environment that supports students' choice, their voice and independence was a common trait observed. Allowing the students to set their learning goals and working towards achieving them and monitoring their growth was also identified.

Teachers focused more on developing curiosity, inquiry and critical thinking among students by giving opportunities to explore and investigate real life problems.

Collaborative learning strategies were used by many teachers to build peer-peer interaction and working in groups to solve the problems and learn through interaction and team work. Teachers in such context acted more as motivators and facilitators.

The teaching learning methods adopted are more towards making the students aware of their metacognitive strategies and self-learning.

### **DISCUSSION**

The national education policy 2020 emphasises on how colleges, teachers and students should take autonomy and ownership of their growth. Teachers in many ways can promote academic autonomy in their classrooms. Modelling autonomy behaviour in classroom can be a direct influence on the students in adopting autonomy in the work they do. Apart from this teachers in their classroom can promote positive growth mind-set among the students where students can embrace the challenges as opportunities for their learning. A sense of overcoming challenges by using their metacognitive apparatus and resilience can be instrumental in adopting academic autonomy.

Teachers' professional growth and knowledge up gradation plays a vital role and has a potential impact on promoting autonomy.

### **CONCLUSION**

Teachers play a crucial role in fostering academic autonomy amongst students. Awareness amongst the teachers and students about academic autonomy is important in promoting academic autonomy. Teachers who are not aware of such aspects should upgrade their knowledge by indulging in professional growth activities. Practicing more of learner centred activities and pedagogies can be pivotal in achieving academic autonomy. Teachers can lead by example in practicing and promoting academic autonomy.



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